

Disaster relief efforts wrap up Vols head home after major deployment

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Most of the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force volunteers who fanned out across Mississippi after the massive tornado outbreak of April 28 have been demobilized, as the remaining chainsaw, debris removal, and feeding needs have been taken over by local churches in many of the hardest-hit areas.

Don Gann, consultant in the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board where the task force is situated, reported May 13 that formal operations were wrapped up May 9 but some volunteers are performing "mostly mop-up" operations before they return to their homes in the next few days.

Gann said the task force volunteers performed over 200 jobs while mobilized, including feeding operations in Tupelo and Louisville, and chainsaw and debris removal duties in those two cities and a number of other locations.

Damage was significant across wide areas, Gann said, so much so that many property owners are going to have to decide whether to even attempt to rebuild heavily damaged structures.

Gann said task force leaders have been pleased with the manner in which local Baptist churches have picked up a considerable amount of responsibility for the relief and recovery needs in their areas.

"The task force is going to make available every resource we can to help local Baptist churches function as the center of recovery activities in their communities," he said.

Disasters like this one often bring spiritual needs to the forefront of people's lives, according to Gann, and Baptist churches are in a prime spot to help. "Disaster relief activities really change how people outside the church view people inside the church."

Gann said the task force also encourages churches to get involved in community disaster relief activities, as a means of outreach and as a good way to show the wider community that the church cares about them.

The Mississippi Disaster Relief Task Force is funded by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program and the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering.



ELEPHANTS AT WORK — Bill Martin (center) puts the finishing touches on a pile of debris in the neighborhood of Parkway Church, Tupelo. Martin is part of The Flying Elephants, the disaster relief team of North Oxford Church, Oxford. (Photo by Tony Martin)

"The attitude toward worship was great ... We focused on thankfulness and the Lord's faithfulness. The word of the day was hope."

Cory Hays
minister of music at
Parkway Church, Tupelo

How can I help?

The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board is accepting financial donations to assist the victims of the violent weather on April 28-29. Checks should be made payable to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, with "Miss. Disaster Relief" noted on the memo line. The address to mail donations is Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. On-line donations can be made at mbcb.org/giving.

"In-kind" donations such as food, clothing, or equipment are not being accepted at this time.

For more information, contact the MBCB Men's Ministry Department at (601) 292-3335 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 335. E-mail: dvail@mbcb.org.

Lives on mend in wake of tornado devastation

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

The EF3 tornado that struck Tupelo April 28 left a 24-mile-long swath from seven miles south-southwest of Tupelo to the town of Ozark in Itawamba County. Thanks to the work of volunteers with the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's disaster relief task force, cleanup and recovery have been effective in righting lives devastated by the storms.

Parkway Church in Tupelo experienced significant damage. According to John Mark Jarrett, the church's minister of youth, "I was here at the church with my wife and family. There were 80-100 folks sheltered in the fellowship hall. A group of us stood outside and watched the storm form. It was eye-opening. I've never seen that happen. We got everyone inside. Thankfully, we were in a safe place before it hit."

Cory Hays, minister of music at the church, said, "I was home with my family. We live out toward Pontotoc. We

were fine and our church folks are okay, pretty much. We had some damage, but there weren't any injuries."

"It's been good to see folks start to try to meet the needs of others," Jarrett said. "Just the attitude of people has been really good."

Hayes said, "The attitude toward worship was great. We had church the following Sunday. We were packed — no lights, no AC, and it was hot — but it was about twice as many as we'd normally have. We focused on thankfulness and the Lord's faithfulness. The word of the day was hope."

Smithville Church was hit three years ago," said Jarrett. "As a ministry, they brought lunch for us after church Sunday." Matt Scopel is pastor of Parkway.

A group from North Oxford Church, Oxford, was also working in the church's neighborhood, which sustained significant damage. The group call themselves The Flying Elephants, even sporting a logo

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Top court rules for prayer at meetings

WASHINGTON (BP) — The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled prayers at a town's legislative meetings are constitutional. In a 5-4 opinion, the high court on May 5 overturned a federal appeals court which had ruled that the prayer policy of the Greece, N.Y., Town Board violated the First Amendment's ban on government establishment of religion.

The Second Circuit Court of Appeals in New York City had itself earlier reversed a federal district judge by deciding Greece's prayer practice "had the effect of affiliating the town with Christianity."

The narrow decision was the latest in a long line of important Supreme Court opinions providing guidance on the relationship between church and state. Advocates for the freedom of religious expression in public meetings applauded the ruling.

In writing the majority opinion, Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy, who maintained his frequent role

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Not so fast

Next week will mark an eminently forgettable anniversary, but it would be best for us to remember at least the moral of the story involved.

Harold Egbert Camping, an obscure radio and Internet evangelist and dedicated numerologist from Oakland, Ca., got it wrong again. The Rapture didn't occur on May 21, 2011, as he so boldly predicted. He did manage to frighten a lot of mixed-up folks, however, with his latest Judgment-Day-is-upon-us campaign, so much so that some people, according to The Washington Post, spent their life savings helping promote Camping's prediction. At least one person turned down a medical school admission so she could prepare for Christ's Second Coming.

Alas, it didn't happen. "I hope that Rev. Harold Camping is right that Jesus and Judgment Day are coming on May 21 — Maranatha — even now, come Lord Jesus!" Steve Lemke, provost of New Orleans Seminary at the time, told Baptist Press a few days before the prediction was to pass. Referencing both 1 Corinthians 16:22 and Revelation 22:20, Lemke said, "However, he is probably wrong, as he has been wrong before. Since Scripture tells us that no one knows the day and hour of Christ's return (Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32), Camping's prediction makes May 21 one of the least likely days for the return of Christ."

This wasn't the first Rapture flop for Camping, who died at the age of 92 in December 2013. He also calculated that the world as we know it would end in September 1994. Apparently, it didn't.

The web site for Family Radio, the name of Camping's ministry, stated at the time that he received a B.S. degree in Civil Engineering from the University of California at Berkeley in 1942 and went into the construction business. He and his family were lifelong members of the Christian Reformed Church until the year 1988. He sold his business and became a full-time volunteer employee of Family Radio, where he eventually presided as president and general manager.

The web site claimed Camping's program was broadcast on more than 140 stations owned by the company in the U.S., but the web site listed only Internet transmissions. There was no way to determine whether the program was ever broadcast in Mississippi.

Camping is simply one of the many failed Rapture prognosticators since Jesus walked on earth. It is a fascinating topic, to be sure, but one that has led many people astray. Here are two examples among hundreds, if not thousands:

■ William Miller (1782-1849), an American Baptist preacher, utilized Old Testament prophecies to predict the Rapture would occur during October 1844. The failure of Jesus to appear as Miller predicted became known as the Great Disappointment, and many believers fell away. Undaunted, Miller followed up with another Rapture prediction that also turned out not to be true.

■ Many of us are old enough to remember the uproar caused by former NASA engineer Edgar Whisenant (1932-2001), who wrote 88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988. So confident was Whisenant that he was widely quoted as saying, "Only if the Bible is in error am I wrong." (He was, and the Bible isn't.) When his prediction did not compel Jesus to return that year, Whisenant issued other pronouncements that He would return in 1989, 1993, and 1994.

David Allen, dean of Southwestern Seminary's school of theology, told Baptist Press in 2011 that when faced with Jesus' words and Camping's latest contradictory claims, he'll trust Jesus.

"Jesus said no one knows the day or the hour of His return. I suspect Jesus knows more about this than anyone from Family Radio. I find it is always better to trust the Bible on these things than people who do and say things directly contradictory to the Bible."

That sounds like solid advice for all of us to remember.

Praying for our leaders

Our church recently completed a study based on Thom Rainer's eye-opening book, *I Am a Church Member*. Rainer is president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville.

In the book, Rainer shared practical insight for developing the right attitude about the part we play as members of the Body of Christ. I breezed through the first few chapters with an air of superiority. As the wife of a pastor for more than 15 years, I was completely proud of myself for being a "model" church member.

After all, I was already obeying most of the principles articulated in the book. I kept thinking, "It sure would be great if 'brother and sister so-and-so' read this book." (Be honest. You know you have thought this too!)

I gleefully stood on my pedestal — until I got to chapter four. The title, *I Will Pray for My Church Leaders*, hit me on the head like a ton of bricks, knocking me off my pedestal and down to my knees.

The moment I read the title, it struck me that I was the one who needed this book. I was not spending quality time daily in prayer for my pastor, who is my husband, and the other leaders of our church.

Bear with me while I confess. I prayed daily like most Christians. I prayed for my family, my health, my needs, my wants, my desires, my struggles... my, my, my. My. All about Me! Oh My! How selfish I was in my prayers! Nowhere in my prayers did I petition the Lord specifically for the needs of my pastor and leaders.

We mistakenly think our pastor doesn't need our prayers because when we see him he is in the pulpit, often wearing a tailored suit and always a smile. We never want to think that our pastors and leaders might be struggling and desperately in need of our prayers.

Rainer challenges us to pray five minutes a day for our pastor. Only five minutes. Who doesn't have five minutes, right?

Jesus is the Son of God, yet he understood the importance of prayer in ministry. In Luke 6:12, the Bible records Jesus going to a mountain to pray. He stayed there and prayed all night. As Christians, we should follow Jesus' example by spending ample time in prayer. While most of us understand we should pray, we have difficulty finding the time to pray. After looking at my own prayer life, I found that I struggled in three areas:

■ **Prioritizing prayer.** How often do we get up in the morning, get dressed, eat



Guest opinion
with Redunda Noble

breakfast, and rush out the door, certain that we will have time to pray later? Later never comes. By 10:30 p.m., I was exhausted from the busyness of the day, managing to whisper only a few words to the Lord before drifting off to sleep. To prioritize prayer, I had to prioritize my morning and designate a specific time to pray.

Learn what your pastor's needs are. Pray for his needs the way you pray for your own. It does not matter when you pray as long as you do pray. Put a daily reminder in your smartphone and take the time to pray for your pastor.

■ **Persevering in prayer.** You will find that when you decide to pray regularly for your pastor and the leaders in your church, many things will challenge your commitment. You may choose to start with prayer early in the morning, but on the day you begin the baby wakes up crying at the same time. You may decide to pray on your lunch break at work, but find that other employees constantly interrupt. You may plan to pray in the evening, but your child's teacher sends extra homework that requires your help.

Whatever the challenge, recognize that prayer honors God. Don't give up. Although you may struggle in the beginning to pray, what joy you will find when you persist.

■ **Prayer as a privilege.** What is your attitude toward prayer? Do you see prayer as just another chore added to your to-do list? Attitudes are important to God. View prayer as a privilege. See it as your opportunity to spend time with the One who loves you most. Ask God to give you a desire to pray.

I have struggled to be consistent, but I find that as I continue to pray my love for the Lord, His church, and my spiritual leaders grows deeper. I hope you find this to be your experience as well.

Noble serves alongside husband James Noble, pastor of Grace Fellowship Church in Memphis.

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Declining baptisms problem tackled by task force

ALPHARETTA (BP) — A North American Mission Board (NAMB) task force designed to address declining baptisms among Southern Baptist churches released its full report on May 12.

An urgent, immediate call for spiritual renewal and personal commitment to evangelism and discipleship are the common threads among five recommendations made by the Pastors' Task Force on Evangelistic Impact and Declining Baptisms.

The national task force, aimed at addressing the continued decrease in baptisms among Southern Baptist churches, was convened last year by the North American Mission Board (NAMB). Most task force members are pastors.

"Southern Baptists' downward spiral in baptisms is the fruit of our spiritual lukewarmness," task force member Ted Traylor, pastor of Olive Church in Pensacola, Fla., said. "I am greatly encouraged by the stirring I see among us toward spiritual awakening and the need for the resurgence of the Great Commission. This task force work and report gives me hope."

The group was formed in part because the 2012 Annual Church Profile (ACP), a voluntary annual survey used to gauge the health of Southern Baptist churches and the Southern Baptist Convention as a whole, reported a drop of 5.5% in the number of baptisms and indicated a continuation of the two-decade downward trend.

Al Gilbert, vice president for evangelism at NAMB, facilitated the group's meetings. LifeWay Research president Ed Stetzer assisted the task force with research support.

"Recognition and ownership of the issue are keys to reversing the decline," Gilbert said.

The task force identified five key areas, described as problems, that pastors and churches must address to reverse the baptism decline, and provided a comment on each area:

■ **Spiritual.** "With urgency, we must join together in fervent and effective prayer for spiritual awakening in our churches and our nation."

"I think all Southern Baptists were aware that our baptisms were declining, but seeing the actual stats was both shocking and heart-breaking. Continuing as we are yet expecting a different result is not an option. We must address this issue now."

Roger Spradlin

pastor of Valley Church in Bakersfield, Ca.

■ **Leadership.** "As pastors we must intentionally model and prioritize personal evangelism while providing clear pathways for our congregations to follow."

■ **Disciple-making.** "As pastors we must create a disciple-making culture — focusing on multiplying disciples who know how to grow in Christ and lead others to Christ."

■ **Next generation.** "As pastors we must leverage our influence, activity and resources to reach and make disciples of the Next Generation."

■ **Celebration.** "As pastors we must celebrate new life in Christ as people publicly profess their faith through baptism. We must establish an ethos of joy that celebrates the practice of personal evangelism and its fruit."

Task force member Manpoong "Dennis" Kim, pastor of Global Mission Church in Silver Spring, Md., said, "I am grateful for this endeavor's commitment to renew the passion for evangelism that ultimately begs the question, 'How then should we proceed?'"

Task force member Roger Spradlin, pastor of Valley Church in Bakersfield, Ca., summed up the conviction of the group.



AMONG THE SAVED — Patrick Coats (right), a North American Mission Board (NAMB) church planter, baptizes Andrew Fellas, a new member of Miami's Kingdom Covenant Church where Coats pastors. A task force assembled by NAMB has released its final report on the troubling issue of declining baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention. (BP photo courtesy of NAMB)

"I think all Southern Baptists were aware that our baptisms were declining, but seeing the actual stats was both shocking and heartbreaking. Continuing as we are yet expecting a different result is not an option. We must address this issue now," Spradlin said.

From 1950-2011, Southern Baptists baptized an average of 379,711 people annually. Only twice during that time did the numbers dip more than 10% below that average. In 2012, the decline was 13% off the average — the worst drop in 62 years.

The report itself takes an even more sobering view of the issue. The report states: "SBC baptisms reached a plateau in the 1950s, peaked in the 1970s, and have stayed fairly constant since that time... The problem is even greater

than these numbers indicate. Considering how the North American population has increased substantially between the 1950s baptism peak and today, these figures indicate how much ground we have lost and are losing."

Gilbert said, "The recommendations are unanimous, but more than that, these men have made this a personal statement of action and they are hopeful that every pastor will review the list and see if they can identify with it. Our hope is that pastors will join us to make these recommendations personal and take action to affect change."

No Mississippi Baptists were appointed to serve on the task force. For the task force's full report, a summary of recommendations, a video challenge, and more information, visit namb.net.

GuideStone opens investment fund to wider participation

DALLAS (BP) — Southern Baptist and evangelical church members can now invest with GuideStone Funds.

Since its 2001 inception, GuideStone Funds participation has been limited to pastors, missionaries, and employees of Southern Baptist and evangelical churches and ministries, as well as their immediate family members. The Southern Baptist Convention's 2013 amendment of GuideStone's ministry statement to allow the entity to offer its investments, insurance, and services to like-minded individuals helped make possible the change.

GuideStone described the change, which went into effect May 5, as an important next step in supporting the company's long-term growth and fulfilling its mission.

"So often, people wonder whether they have to choose the performance they hope to achieve for their investments or the values they strive to live out today," Rodric E. Cummins, senior vice president and chief investment officer of GuideStone Capital Management, said. "We believe that the many industry recognitions GuideStone Funds has received help give evidence that investors don't have to compromise their values to obtain industry-leading performance."

Ron Dugan, chief strategic investment officer for GuideStone, said, "We believe that the time is right to make these funds available to a wider Christian audience."

"Having successfully weathered financial storms after September 2001, as well as the economic downturn of 2008-2009,

we believe our funds are battle-tested and offer a good approach for values-based investors who want to invest in accordance with their values."

"Our commitment to our investors, whether they are the pastors we were founded to serve over nine decades ago, church members or financial advisors, is the same: to help them achieve their long-term goals," Dugan said. "On each desk at GuideStone is a little sign that reminds us of our guiding vision as we seek to be a lifelong partner in enhancing the financial security of our participants. We will not waver from that as we seek to work each day with integrity and skill on behalf of our investors."

GuideStone Funds is a controlled-affiliate of GuideStone

Financial Resources, a 96-year-old entity of the Southern Baptist Convention. Originally founded as a relief organization, GuideStone has transitioned into providing employer-sponsored retirement plans, life and health products, and property and casualty coverage.

In the mutual funds group, GuideStone launched the first Christian-based target-date fund lineup in 2006.

Five of GuideStone's 11 Select Funds, as of March 31, have 4- or 5-star Morningstar ratings. In 2012, Lipper named GuideStone Funds its Best Overall Small Fund Group in the U.S. — the first Christian-screened fund family of its kind to receive this award.

Lipper recognized performance over the three-year period ending November 30, 2011, and

ranked GuideStone No. 1 out of 182 eligible fund families with up to \$40 billion in assets.

In 2013, GuideStone's MyDestination 2025 Fund was ranked No. 1 out of 92 similar funds for its performance over the three-year period ending Nov. 30, 2012. Lipper honored GuideStone's Extended-Duration Bond Fund as the Best Fund Over 3 Years and the Best Fund Over 5 Years in the Corporate Debt A-Rated Funds category, for period ending Nov. 30, 2013. In each category, the Extended-Duration Bond Fund beat out more than 50 eligible funds.

For more information about GuideStone Funds or to obtain a prospectus with important information on the funds, call toll free (888) 473-8637 or visit GuideStoneFunds.com.

I always found Mother's Day to be the kind of over-the-top celebration to say thank you to moms with an undercurrent of uneasiness because of everybody who did not have a perfect mom. Well, I guess I should restate that: nobody has a perfect mom. Well, maybe I should restate that: nobody has a perfect mom from your perspective. At the time she was raising you and the instructions she was applying and the correction she was carrying out, you may have felt that the judge and jury in your home called mom was not always fair. She probably wasn't, but she probably would have been fairer if she would have had perfect, fair kids which, by the way, she didn't.

Mother's Day brings to the front of so many people's memories the disappointments that you struggled with as a mother or the disappointments that you struggled with that were called your children or the disappointments that you felt because you didn't feel support from your mate who just happened to be their dad, and so Mother's Day can be a day of reflection that is not always filled with joy. Then there are the parents, the moms, who struggle with grief and depression at Mother's Day because of the loss of a child. It may be that they lost a child in an accident or after a long illness, or they may be living with the loss that continues as their child was taken over by some addiction. It's a tough time. Still the fact is that moms are great people and without question are deserving of a special day to be honored, appreciated and even pampered.

Probably one of the saddest things about moms is that many of us will be in the fourth quarter of life before we begin to fully understand how much mom did for us. Somewhere later in life for men and women, the reality sets in that mom had great obstacles to overcome almost daily. Long overtime hours to put in and tedious nerve-wracking micromanaging that must be done so that we wouldn't wreck our lives before they got started good. Sometimes we just excuse all those things, brush them aside, thinking that's just what moms do. For



Directions

With Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Reflections on Mother's Day

when they do it makes a big difference in a child's life and when they don't it makes a catastrophic difference in a child's life. Moms are essential and their work is profound and their investment is unending. I am fully aware that last Sunday was Mother's Day and it appears as though this article is late. No, by design it comes before you the week after the one-day recognition to call attention to what needs to be done the other 364 days of the year.

Number One - Honor your mother. As you probably well know, this is one of the Ten Commandments and it is the first commandment that has attached to it a promise. Later the Apostle Paul would write in the New Testament and say "obey your parents" (Eph. 6:1) and that is certainly a part of the emphasis. But when the commandment was given, we are called on to honor our father and our mother and that involves more than just doing what they say, obeying them. Honor involves being obedient, but the more significant thing is to respect your mother and father. You see just being an obedient child is one thing. To pick up your clothes, maybe to do some chores, to be polite, but honor goes far, far

beyond that. Just living under your mom and dad's roof and obeying their rules is one thing, but honor extends to your mom and dad all your life even after they are gone. You have a genuine respect for who they were, what they stood for, what they tried to do for you and how God used them in your life even though they were not perfect and probably weren't nearly as fine as you are. They deserve your respect.

Number Two - Stay in touch. Regardless of whether you live a thousand miles away from your mom or maybe just a thousand feet, stay in touch. Now, I'm not talking about every moment of every day, and I'm not even talking about endless hours of sitting and conversing. I know you're busy. Your mom and dad know you're busy. They are probably busy, too, and they have some sense of understanding of work and responsibilities with the family and maybe with church or civic organizations. They get it, but a call just to check on them and a quick follow up if you can do something is so deeply appreciated. Even if they're gone, stay in touch. I don't mean that you have to talk to them or try to contact somebody from beyond, but stay in touch with their

memory and gently pass it along to your kids and grandkids. Now, if it is bothersome to you to try to keep in touch and you've just got so much on your plate you don't want to have anything to do with the people who probably singularly had more to do with you getting to be where you are and who you are than anybody, that's fine. Just don't do it, but be aware that probably as the days go by they may drift away less and less in touch with life and then be gone and you will look back and struggle with being out of touch with a large part of your own heritage. Can you be in touch as much as they want you to be? Probably not. You don't need to live under the guilt that parents will sometimes dump on their kids. You know when you make an effort to keep the connection and to care about them, you will be fine.

Number Three - Contribute. There will probably be a time and a way that you will need to do what you can to contribute to helping your mom or dad. Don't just be a pushy know-it-all with your parents but gently try to help them along when their mental faculties are not as sharp as they used to be. Their decision making process is not adequate for what they are facing, and they may not be able to remember as they once did. You help them. Sometimes dollars help. In her latter years, my mom did not have adequate retirement income to take care of the needs in her life, so her five boys pitched in each month into the pool of resources to make sure that she was taken care of. She never knew how all that worked and from time to time she would say, "It is amazing how far this money goes to meet my needs." She was right. There were also unseen, and to her unknown, caregivers and we were all blessed because of it.

So here, days away from Mother's Day celebrations, take time to enjoy the blessing of the mom God gave you and beyond that honor your father and your mother.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF BROOKLYN, MS IS PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A YEAR ROUND BI-VOCATIONAL YOUTH PASTOR. Please email cover letter, resume and references to allen@flowestlaw.net.

HOLLY SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, MS IS PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PREACHER/PASTOR. If interested please call: 601-833-8437 or 601-935-2239

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF EUPORA IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC AND ASSOCIATE PASTOR. Learn more about the ministries of FBC Eupora at www.fbcupora.com. Please send your resume to FBC Eupora, ATTN: Minister of Music Committee, P.O. Box 268, Eupora, MS 39744.

HEBRON BAPTIST CHURCH, MERIDIAN, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PIANIST to play for morning and evening worship and weekly choir rehearsal. Will work closely with Pastor and Worship Leader to plan worship services. Email resumes to maittohebronbaptist@bellsouth.net or mail to Hebron Baptist, 4735 Vivimile Causeville Rd, Meridian, MS 39301.

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Conference

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Bible Drill



SLAYDEN CHURCH, MARSHALL ASSOCIATION, recognizes its Bible drillers in its adult/youth division and in its children's division.



CALVARY CHURCH, HATTIESBURG, recognizes its Bible drillers.



MID-DELTA ASSOCIATION held its Bible drill Apr. 10, at **MORRISON CHAPEL CHURCH, CLEVELAND**. Participants were from **CALVARY CHURCH, CLEVELAND, FIRST CHURCH, CLEVELAND, HOLLANDALE CHURCH, FIRST CHURCH, INDIANOLA, MORRISON CHAPEL CHURCH, AND YALE STREET CHURCH**.



CALVARY CHURCH, WAYNESBORO, recognizes its youth Bible drillers and its children's Bible drillers.



CALVARY CHURCH, COLUMBIA, recognizes its Bible drill participants.



TUCKERS CROSSING CHURCH, LAUREL, recognizes its Bible drillers.



STANDING PINE CHURCH, LEAKE ASSOCIATION, recognizes its Bible drillers.



CLEARY CHURCH, FLORENCE, recognizes its Bible drillers and participants in the speakers tournament.

Just for the Record



CALVARY CHURCH, COLUMBIA, honored pastor Milard Moak on the occasion of his fifth anniversary as pastor. Shown are Moak and his wife Melinda.



The nursery choir of **FIRST CHURCH, EUPORA**, performed as part of Easter Sunday services.



MCLAURIN HEIGHTS CHURCH, PEARL, recently licensed Tommy Strong to the ministry. He attends William Carey University and intends to seek a position in vocational ministry. Shown are Scott Carter, Strong, and pastor J. Steve Jackson.



Mississippi Campers on Mission recently held a revival at **FELLOWSHIP CHURCH, STARKVILLE**, where fellow camper Dickie Bryan is pastor and fellow camper Jessie Bennett is music director. Thirty-three campers participated.



HOLLY CHURCH, ALCORN ASSOCIATION, licensed Austin Emerson to the gospel ministry Apr. 27. Shown are Emerson and pastor John Boler.

SAULS VALLEY CHURCH, MONTICELLO, has begun its first-ever youth choir. Shown, front, are Madison Norwood, Rylea Carney, Kodi Davis, Macey Carney, Reagan Carney, and Molly Davis; back, Madelyn Stokes.

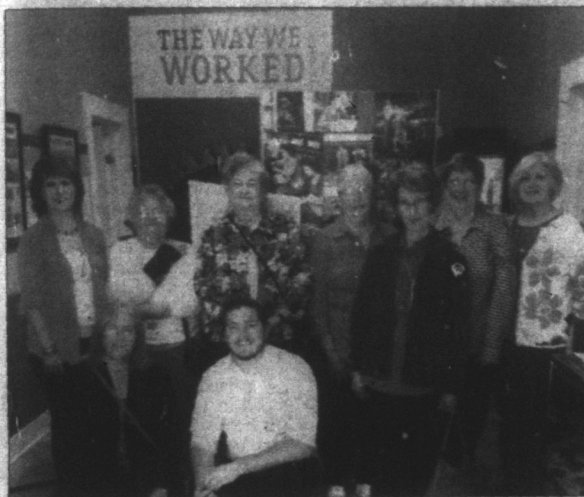


NEW BETHEL CHURCH, CARROLL gave study Bibles to seniors Bobbie Jean Brewster, Alana Lorene Lowry, and Laura Ellett in April.



The children of **SPRING HILL CHURCH, WATERFORD**, performed Jesus is Alive Easter Sunday. John Parker, pastor.

Just for the Record



The senior adults from **NEW HEIGHTS CHURCH, SUMMIT**, attended the Smithsonian exhibit, The Way We Worked, at Co-Lin Community College, Wesson.



FIRST CHURCH, HOLLY SPRINGS, held its first annual Amazing "G" race scavenger hunt Apr. 26, with teams racing all over Holly Springs performing tasks and collecting items. Shown is the winning team.



EDGEFIELD CHURCH, MCCOOL, recognized pianist Karen Hunt for 40 years of service.

RISE UP & REACH OUT THROUGH BIBLE STUDY CONFERENCES

JULY 12, 2014
8:30 a.m. - noon
NORTH GREENWOOD BC,
GREENWOOD
Dr. Wayne Marshall

AUGUST 9, 2014
8:30 a.m. - noon
PETAL-HARVEY BC,
PETAL
Dr. Larry LeBlanc

ALL PASTORS, SUNDAY SCHOOL/SMALL GROUP DIRECTORS, PRESCHOOL, CHILDREN, STUDENT AND ADULT BIBLE STUDY LEADERSHIP PLEASE COME TO THIS EVENT WE HAVE PLANNED FOR YOU. BELOW IS WHAT WE WILL OFFER.

KEYNOTE MESSAGE

Importance of a healthy teaching and healthy outreach through our Sunday School and Small Groups to your community.

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MY HOPE AMERICA

We continue with Billy Graham's emphasis to move our churches forward in 2014. We will share latest resources that will be available for your church.

Preschool, Children, Student, and Adult Leadership Topics are:

Session 1: Healthy Reaching: Outreach, Ministry and Building Relationships in your Bible Study through Sunday School and Small Groups

Session 2: Healthy Teaching: Reaching Techniques for Bible Study through Sunday School and Small Groups

Pastors & General Officers Leadership Topics are:

Session 1: Healthy Reaching: Me & the Church; Me & the World/Others

Session 2: Healthy Leaders: God & Me; Me & My Family (Personal)

JUNE 1 you may register online at www.mbc.org

For more information

call 800-451-1111 ext. 221 or 940-390-2211

ga@mbc.org

In other Church News:

► **Joel and Heather Strahan** with daughters **Ryan, Ellie and Josie** left for the mission field April 10. They will be in Moscow, Russia for two years studying the language. Joel will serve as a Humanitarian Aid Consultant in Siberia. They will be working with the indigenous people in Far North Russia. Their home will be in Kuchatka, land of the Aleuts, Alyutors and other tribes. Strahan served as Ministry of Music/Education for the past year at **Slayden Church** (Marshall Assoc.). Heather is from Slayden and met Joel when he served previously at Slayden as Music/Youth Minister. Rusty Fair is Pastor.

► **Howard D. Smith** and his wife **Betty** will be honored upon their 60th anniversary of gospel ministry May 31, 2 - 4 p.m., with a reception in the home of **Salena and Mickey Greenlee** at 1225 Jackson Liberty Dr. NW, Brookhaven. Friends and family; no gifts. Smith was ordained and licensed in 1954 at **Friendship Church, Brookhaven**.



The children's choir of **ST. WOOD CHURCH, RANKIN COUNTY**, presented the Easter musical, *Christ is Risen*.



NORTH MORTON CHURCH, SCOTT ASSOCIATION, ordained **Brian Massey** and **Jessie Prestige** as deacons. Shown are Massey, pastor **Gary Wyatt**, and Prestige.



WEST HEIGHTS CHURCH, PONTOTOC, held their GA recognition May 7. GA's in grades 1 - 6 were represented. Sixth grade girls receiving their crowns were, from left, **Randa Payne, McKenzie Thomas, and Sloan Sansing**. **David Hamilton**, pastor.

First Person: How your health really does work

FIRST IN A SERIES

By Chris Anderson
Correspondent

I want to thank the leadership of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board for allowing me space in The Baptist Record to share some thoughts with you about issues related to physical health. I have great appreciation for the work and mission of the Convention, and consider this opportunity an honor.

My entire career has been in healthcare. No, I'm not a physician or a nurse. I'm an administrator with a background in accounting who recently became the President and CEO of Mississippi Baptist Health Systems. Though I am somewhat new to "the Baptist," Baptist is not new to me. I was born at Baptist and grew up here in Jackson. I look forward to ensuring that Baptist Health Systems continues to live its mission and thrives in this environment of uncertain reimbursement for the care we provide.

Over the years, most people have grown used to health insurance coverage that paid for the majority of the costs of their healthcare. This reimbursement system blinded consumers to the reality of the actual cost of the care. The same has been true in hospitals, physicians' offices, and laboratory services. Since we haven't had to pay much from our own pockets, we did not know the actual costs. One of the side consequences of this

It may sound strange to you to hear me say this, but one of the best things you and I can do is to become physically healthy so we don't need much healthcare ... How many of us are relying on a pill to keep our health problems under control instead of eliminating the problem ourselves when we can?



ANDERSON

is the idea that we can do as we please in taking care, or not taking care, of our health, and there will always be a doctor, a pill, and a technology that can fix us.

It may sound strange to you to hear me say this, but one of the best things you and I can do is to become physically healthy so we don't need much healthcare. There will always be unavoidable illness and injury that require the best healthcare available, and Baptist is ready to offer just that — but at the same time, how many of us are relying on a pill to keep our health problems under control instead of eliminating the problem ourselves when we can?

Last year, as a complement to the Convention's focus on improving ourselves through mind, body, and spirit, Baptist Health Systems created a six-week DVD-led Bible study titled, *HealthWorks — A Journey to a Healthier You*. Let me explain more about the title. You can just read the word, "HealthWorks," and that could be the end of it or, through participation in this series, you can come to understand having

good health really works for you and your entire family in numerous ways.

Four members of our medical staff participated in a series of taped interviews regarding the top six areas of health concerns:

- General Health.
- Heart/Stroke.
- Diabetes.
- Obesity.
- Cancer.
- Intimacy.

Any improvements you and I make now in these areas will continue to pay long-term dividends in the future. Our physicians talk about things we can easily do to improve our health status right away. If you are like me, you can already name at least two things you should change. This series is informative, entertaining, and wrapped in a Bible study format that just may inspire you to get started.

Over the next few months, one of our physicians will provide more detail about the content of each segment through an article here in The Baptist Record. Learn more about this series and place an order at HealthWorksDVD.com.

OBITUARY

John Goldwire McCall, born July 13, 1917 in Quitman, Ga., passed away Apr. 8 in Vicksburg. He graduated from high school in Madison, Fla., and from Stetson University, Deland, Fl. He received the ThM and ThD degrees from Southern Seminary. He served as a US Army Chaplain in Patton's Third Army during WWII. He pastored churches in Florida, Kentucky, and Mooresville, Ky., before becoming pastor of First Church, Vicksburg, from 1952-1982. He served as moderator of the Warren Association, served on the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, and was president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention 1969-1970. He was a member of the Radio and Television Commission of the SBC, and served on the Mississippi College Board of Trustees for two terms. He was named Vicksburg/Warren County Man of the Year in 1975 and received the Service to Humanity Award from MC for 1975-76. Southern Seminary honored him as Distinguished Alumnus in 1991 and was named MC's Professor of the Year in 1991.

He taught at Boyce Bible College, Louisville, Ky.; Mississippi College; the International Baptist Theological Seminary for Eastern Africa in Arusha, Tanzania; and served several churches as interim, his last being Edwards Church, ending in February, 2012.

He was married to Wilma Grass McCall from 1949 until her death in 1983. He married Vicki Dumwoody McCall in 1984 and they made their home in Clinton. He is survived by his wife, Vicki; sons, John (Ginger) of Long Beach; Dennis (Margaret), of Homer, Ga.; three grandchildren; a sister, Mary Love Strum, Jacksonville, Fla.; a brother, Frank Clark McCall, Seattle, Wa.; and several nieces and nephews.

The funeral was Apr. 12, at First Church, Vicksburg, with burial in the Vicksburg City Cemetery.

MCCALL

BIBLIOCIPHER

BUH IMZ XAHREIGHZ XNRIM.

JMUXUZYZH TZKRZYIM UP MRC

XMNKK PUI TZ NXMNCZO.

HUCNPX IZP: ZKZYYP

Clue: T = B

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John 8:28

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



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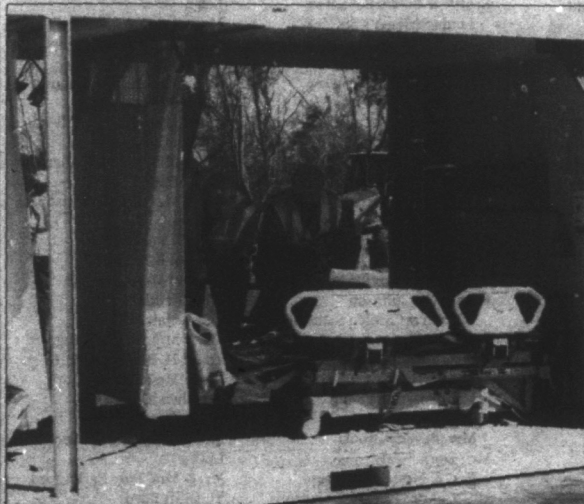
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NORTH CAROLINA BAPTIST MEN ASSIST WITH LOUISVILLE RECOVERY



Disaster relief volunteers from the North Carolina Convention are shown helping set up a mobile hospital in Louisville. The facility, composed of hard-sided modules, trailers, and tents, will provide full hospital services including an ICU and emergency room. (Photo by Tony Martin)

MEND

cont. from p. 1

of the same on their truck. "We were working on the coast following Katrina," said Bill Martin, who was leading the group. "We were working on weekends and staying at Gulf Coast Association's building."

"We were eating and someone said, 'We need a name.' Finally someone mentioned that we were just a bunch of dumbos, not necessarily skilled in anything, so we decided we would adopt that image of Dumbo flying."

The group brought the disaster relief trailer from Lafayette Association on the Thursday after the storm and set it up Friday. The trailer has full private showers — three for men and three for women. The trailer was stationed at Auburn Church, Tupelo.

The North Oxford Church group worked around Parkway Church and St. Luke's Methodist Church. "We've been working with a Desoto chainsaw group," Martin said. "This is our first time today to come over with the chainsaw groups."

"We're 'newbies,' with about 25 folks trained since

February. It's been good for us. About a dozen of us have been working. The trailer has been our main thing, so we've learned a lot about chainsaw work. After we leave, we'll be able to know what we need to do and be even more organized."

"The folks here today are mostly ours, but once you work with us you're an 'elephant!'"

In addition to the chainsaw and cleanup work, volunteers were active at a Baptist feeding unit set up at Auburn Church in the Auburn community near Tupelo. Auburn Church also sustained some damage.

Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force member David Warren, who oversaw the feeding operation at Auburn Church, said that they had served over 2,500 meals. "The church folks have been great," Warren said. "They delivered meals and helped in a lot of other ways."

Don Gann, consultant in the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board where the task force is situated, said the task force is seeing more and more local churches take up disaster relief responsi-

bilities in their areas, instead of strictly relying on the task force to step in and run operations. "I believe that is a trend that's going to increase in the future," he said.

The Mississippi Disaster Relief Task Force is funded by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program and the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering.

The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board is accepting financial donations to assist the victims of the violent weather on April 28-29. Checks should be made payable to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, with "Miss. Disaster Relief" noted on the memo line. The address to mail donations is Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. On-line donations can be made at mcb.org/giving.

"In-kind" donations such as food, clothing, or equipment are not being accepted at this time.

For more information, contact the MBCB Men's Ministry Department at (601) 292-3335 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 335. E-mail: dvail@mcb.org.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mcb.org.

PRAYER

cont. from p. 1

as the pivotal deciding vote on a deeply divided court, stated, "That the First Congress provided for the appointment of chaplains only days after approving language for the First Amendment demonstrates that the Framers considered legislative prayer a benign acknowledgment of religion's role in society."

Joining Kennedy, who was appointed by U.S. President Ronald Reagan, in the majority were:

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"That the First Congress provided for the appointment of chaplains only days after approving language for the First Amendment demonstrates that the Framers considered legislative prayer a benign acknowledgment of religion's role in society."

**Anthony Kennedy
Associate Justice**

■ Chief Justice John Roberts, appointed by U.S. President George W. Bush.

■ Senior Associate Justice Antonin Scalia, appointed by Reagan.

■ Associate Justice Clarence Thomas, appointed by U.S. President George H.W. Bush.

■ Associate Justice Samuel Alito, appointed by George W. Bush.

The court's four more liberal members dissented:

■ Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, appointed by U.S. President Bill Clinton.

■ Associate Justice Stephen

Breyer, appointed by Clinton.

■ Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor, appointed by U.S. President Barack Obama.

■ Associate Justice Elena Kagan, appointed by Obama.

In her dissenting opinion, Kagan wrote, "When the citizens of this country approach their government, they do so only as Americans, not as members of one faith or another. And that means that even in a partly legislative body, they should not confront government-sponsored worship that divides them along religious lines."



ONEWAY Quartet

**North Greenwood Baptist
615 Grand Boulevard
Greenwood, MS
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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

DECEMBER 2013

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JANUARY 2014

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Mrs. Beverly Brooks
Jane & Lester Stephens
Warren & Carolyn Satterfield

JANUARY 2014

MEMORIALS

Conner Adams
Ms. Mary Margaret Adams
Adene Addison

W. R. Shurley, III, M.D.

John Albritton
Mrs. Betty A. Templeton
Rev. L. C. Anthony
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Blackburn
Mr. & Mrs. John Logan &
Leigh
Mrs. Syble Lee
Mr. & Mrs. Mickey Daughdrill
Kirk Arnett
Mrs. Betty A. Templeton
Allen Bailey
Mr. & Mrs. John F. Miller, Jr.
Milton Barker
Mr. & Mrs. Wade L. Allen
Perry Barnett
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Williamson
Jack Beall
Alton & Peggy Taylor
McCool BC
Mother of Melicia Deene
Mrs. Glenda C. Fry
Frances Blalock
Mr. & Mrs. David B. Ingram
Bernard H. Booth, III, M.D.
Mr. & Mrs. Frank O.
Crosthwaite, Jr.
Billy Joe Fox
Medallion Financial Services,
LLC
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Earl Alford
A. H. (Bill) Boyd
Mrs. Betty A. Templeton
Donald Brear
Mrs. Tena Haskins
Mr. Terry Brinson
L.L. Foster SSC, Prentiss BC
Mr. & Mrs. E. W. Speights, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. John Logan &
Leigh
Mrs. Syble Lee
Mr. & Mrs. Mickey Daughdrill
Pat Kelly Brooks
Mr. & Mrs. David Purr
Mr. & Mrs. Major A. Treadway
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Greenlee, Jr.
Brother of Freddie Jones
Bovina BC
Milton Brown
Mary & Frank Kennedy

BCV EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff.

They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregivers and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty.

Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment.

To apply for the current Houseparent openings, please contact Celeste Cade at ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com or 601-922-2242.

A complete job description and application may be downloaded at www.baptistchildrensvillage.com.

Righteous Romance • Song of Songs 1:7-8, 15-2:2; 4:9-12

As we live our lives, we soon learn that there are proper and improper ways of doing most things. Showing love and demonstrating our love for the opposite sex is no different. In the society we live in we have cheapened romantic expression to the point of degrading people as mere objects. Many Christians have responded with the attitude that all sexual and physical love is to be avoided. All one has to do is read through the book Song of Songs to realize that God created us to express romantic love to our mate. The New Testament reminds us that "God is Love" in 1 John 4:16, and the Bible itself is the story of God's ultimate expression of love toward us through His son, Jesus Christ. In this session we will explore how to express romantic love in God-honoring ways, and how not to compromise our Godly morals.

It's About Being Together (Song of Songs 1:7-8)

The ground rule we must set as we begin is that the expression of romantic love is based in the marriage relationship. When a man and woman are married their expressions of love toward each other are to be very intimate and romantic. While Song of Songs has had many interpretive approaches applied to it, it was written by Solomon as a love letter, either about the love

of his life or the ideal love relationship. In a proper love relationship, we long to be with each other and to have each other's undivided attention. Many relationships suffer because we are distracted and do not give our full attention to our mate when we are together. We express our love for and instill value in a person when we initiate spending time with them and paying full attention to them when we are together.

Mutual Admiration (Song of Songs 1:15-2:2)

When you read this section of scripture, you are instantly aware of the mutual admiration Solomon and his love had for each other. His words are the words of what we would describe as a "hopeless romantic." His love is like a beautiful lily among the thorns. The words he uses in this passage are verbal expressions of love that he pours out on his loved one. Spouses and prospective spouses need to be able to use warm



Explore the Bible with Huey Dedmon

and honest words to express their mutual love for each other. The more regular these expressions are, the more our love relationship will grow into a God-honoring relationship. Be reminded that the proper love relationship can only be achieved within the context of the marriage relationship.

Be on Guard (Song of Songs 2:15)

Any relationship, especially a relationship that seeks to honor God, is a prime target for the attacks of Satan. The use of the word "vineyard" refers to the beauty of a relationship that is in full bloom, just before harvest. It pictures the beauty of two people in a love relationship, anticipating their married life together. The reference to "foxes" is a warning to be on guard for anything that might spoil or harm this romance. The entire verse seems to indicate a strong resolve by both parties to preserve themselves, and not allow sin to overtake them before their marriage vows are given one to the other.

If we desire to have a romance that honors God, we must always be on guard to protect ourselves and the ones we love.

Treasure the Treasures (Song of Songs 4:9-12)

I believe one of the most important ingredients in a marriage relationship is entering that relationship being sexually pure. God sanctioned marriage between one woman and one man, wholly committed to each other for life. Solomon and his bride are celebrating their purity as they enter in the lifelong marriage relationship. They begin their life together treasuring what matters the most, their purity. I believe this is not only a sexual purity, but a purity that is an example of their commitment to practice Godly wisdom in their lives. God created us male and female, and intended that we share a God-honoring, romantic relationship with our spouse. Remaining pure outside of the marriage relationship is one way to honor God in our love relationships. We must also never forget that the ultimate expression of any love relationship is seen in Jesus as He loves His bride, the church.

Dedmon is Associate Pastor for Education and Outreach, Brandon Church, Brandon.

Hope Renewed • John 18:15-18, 25-27; 21:15-19

THREE complete denials. TWO clean feet. ONE crowing rooster. There was evening. Now there was morning of two of the worst days of his life. As Peter the fisherman stared down at the leather sandals covering his recently tenderly-washed feet, I'm certain that his wounded heart was begging and pleading for a "do-over." After locking eyes with Jesus, Peter's own bitter tears were dripping on those crusty toes, making trails in the dust. Every dawning day for the rest of his life, some early bird rooster would remind him of the shame he felt at that tragic moment. HOPE had taken a HIKE.

What Peter could not have known at that cataclysmic moment was this: fifty-three days later, thanks to the covering grace and complete forgiveness of God through the shed blood of Jesus, this bedraggled fisherman would need a "get out of jail free" card. The eleven remaining disciples who trained at the feet of The Master for three years were about to accept their role as apostles dispatched with the message of salvation. A prison record for preaching that gospel was in their immediate future! These men would soon become fishers of... people! HOPE would be the HOOK.

The grief of Passover and the death of The Lamb of God would be followed by the power of Pentecost and the birth of the

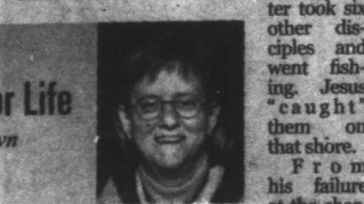
church Jesus died to establish. Sandwiched between those two Jewish festivals would be the resurrection of Jesus, forty days of walking with Jesus followed by the ascension of Jesus. Then, after ten days of fervent prayer, this group of 120 followers would be filled with the strength and presence of The Holy Spirit. HOPE was on HOLD.

There was no power in Peter's life today. Friday morning, HOPE was looking partly cloudy with a chance of thunderstorms.

Peter was inconsolable. At supper last evening, he had looked DOWN into those eyes of Jesus as his own feet were being washed. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter looked UP into those eyes while Jesus begged him to stay awake and pray. As morning dawned in the courtyard of the High Priest, Peter denied his Lord for the third time. Luke 22:60-62 tells us that the Lord turned and looked AT Peter as the rooster announced this God-ordained day of Golgotha. Three hours later, Peter would look

UP to see those bloody, wounded eyes of Jesus looking DOWN at those standing at the foot of His cross.

HOPE had NOT taken a HIKE. Two song titles ring in my heart to describe this moment: "Love Grew Where the Blood Fell" (author John Stallings) and "Were it Not for Grace" (author Phil McHugh). Jesus stood ready to restore HOPE to Peter and establish him as the "GoTo" guy for the infant church. John 21 tells the story. Peter took six other disciples and went fishing. Jesus "caught" them on that shore.



Bible Studies for Life with Becky Brown

From his failure at the charcoal fire in the courtyard of the High Priest to his forgiveness at the charcoal fire on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, Peter found HOPE renewed. Jesus invited these seven men to enjoy a breakfast of bread and grilled fish. Once again, the guys had fished all night and caught nothing. When Jesus told them where to fish, they caught more than they could imagine. "Bring some of the fish that

YOU have caught," Jesus told them. He knew they would readily (but silently) admit that they were able to catch those fish only with His help. Fishing for people one-on-one requires help from The Three-In-One. Final exam. Check. To this day, Peter still wonders how in the world a carpenter knew anything about fishing.

As they shared their "POBOY" breakfast, Peter, James, John, Nathaniel, Thomas and the other two unidentified disciples must have remembered the feeding of the 4000 (Matthew 15, Mark 8) and the feeding of the 5000 (Matthew 14, Mark 6, Luke 9, John 6). Possibly, they were near that same location along the shore. Peter was surely reminded of his walk on the water with Jesus...especially the sinking part of that experience.

After breakfast, Jesus offered Peter three opportunities to express his love and loyalty. THREE bitter denials erased. TWO charcoal fires extinguished. ONE restored disciple commissioned. Fisherman Peter became the rooster—daily announcing the gospel, daily denying himself, daily taking up the cross of Jesus from Jerusalem to the world! HOPE is HERE! GO FISH!

Brown is staff evangelist at First Church, Richland

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Double Springs Church, Maben:** Revival, May 18 - 21; Sun., 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Danny Irvin, speaker; Jeff Short, music.
► **Trinity Church, Laurel:** Revival, May 18 - 21; Sun., 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.;

Argile Smith, speaker; Steven Jefcoat, music.
► **Clear Branch Church, Wesson:** 134th homecoming, May 18; special presentation service, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Bruce Brady, speaker;

Angeline McKeithen, music.
► **Enterprise Church, Liberty:** 60th anniversary, May 18; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m. followed by lunch; Ernest Whittington, pastor.
► **Phoebe Church, Phoebe:** 125th anniversary; services, 10 a.m., followed by lunch; Jim Putral, speaker.
► **Blackwater Church, Kemper County:** Homecoming and

revival, May 18 - 21; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Malcolm Lewis, speaker; Heath Riggs, pastor.
► **Bellevue Church, Pontotoc County:** Homecoming and revival, May 18 - 21; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Justin Gates, speaker; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Bobby Caples, speaker; Tommy Immon, pastor.

► **Wayside Church, Snobey:** Homecoming, May 18; services, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish dinner; Truma Scarborough, speaker; Larry Kilgore, music.
► **Airport Church, Grenada:** 50th homecoming, May 18; noon covered dish lunch; Paul Blanchard, speaker; Jerry and Barbara Harrell, music; John Lancaster, pastor.

Just for the Record



The children's choir of **YELLOW CREEK CHURCH, IUKA**, performed as part of Easter Sunday services.



The children of **PROVIDENCE CHURCH, GRENADA**, presented an Easter program with the assistance of some of the youth.



The RA's of **CALVARY CHURCH, VICKSBURG**, are shown with their ribbons and trophies after their derby car race.



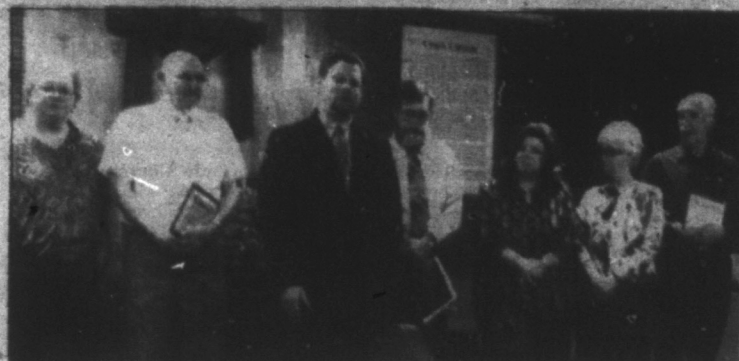
CALVARY CHURCH, WAYNEBORO, released purple balloons in honor of loved ones who have been affected by cancer or are battling cancer.



HICKORY CHURCH, HICKORY, celebrated Graduation Day with four K5 grads, three college grads, and 12 high school grads.



SILVER CREEK CHURCH, PIKE COUNTY, held old fashion games May 3 as part of the church's 200th celebration. Participants received an engraved medal featuring a cross and Bible.



ANDREW CHAPEL CHURCH, BRANDON, ordained Ronnie Fortune and Timothy Smith as deacons Mar. 16. Shown are Faynette Fortune, Fortune, pastor Keith McGee, Smith, Teresa Smith, Louise McGee, and Clayton McGee.



EDGEFIELD CHURCH, MCCOOL, recognizes its youth for memorizing and reciting the books of the Bible with personalized Bibles and certificates. Back row: Mallory Hunt, Trevor Tanksley, Kansas Tanksley, Blake Wilkinson; front row: Nolan Drew, Gabi Wilkinson, Eli Wilkinson, and Abbi Wilkinson.